



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 5 July – 11 July 2010



5 July 1912 **First military aviators.** Capt. Charles deForest Chandler, 2d Lt. Thomas D. Milling, and 2d Lt. Henry H. Arnold became the first Army pilots to qualify as military aviators.

7 July 1914 **Dr. Robert H. Goddard received a U.S. patent** for a two-stage solid-fuel rocket. On July 14, the government issued another patent to Goddard for a liquid-fueled rocket design.

Goddard realized that long-range missiles, especially ones that could go into outer space, could not be powered by TNT but required liquid fuels to allow combustion in an airless environment. Eventually he filed patents for everything from gyroscopic guidance systems to fin-stabilized steering. However, Goddard was ridiculed in the U.S. for his theories and his first successful liquid-fueled rocket did not fly until 1926 (photo at right).



In the late 1930s, German rocket engineers asked Goddard technical questions to which he gave casual responses. Goddard's warnings to the Army about German military rocketry were ignored. By the end of World War II, Goddard had filed more than 200 patent applications, all of which were available for inspection. When a captured German scientist was asked about the origin of the V-2 rocket, he was said to have responded, "Why don't you ask your own Dr. Goddard? He knows better than any of us."

Dr. Goddard died of throat cancer in late 1945. Known later as the "father" of American rocketry, he had 69 patents for his inventions and his designs laid the foundation for U.S. spaceflight. See <http://www.time.com/time/time100/scientist/profile/goddard.html>.



6 July 1937 Colonel M. F. Harmon and 1st Lt. Robert Warren made an **inspection of Hickam Field** from a P-12 aircraft and then landed there. Satisfied with that visit, the Air Corps planned for eventual **transfer of other units to Hickam**. The commanding general of the 18th Wing issued an order assigning the 18th Wing Headquarters to Hickam Field.

The photo at left is Hickam Field on 21 July 1937, looking northeast over the original flightline and the first eight hangars. The Pearl Harbor Navy Base was blanked for security reasons.

7 July 1942 Flying a Lockheed Vega A-29 Hudson, Lt Harry J. Kane of the 396 BMS attacked and sank a German submarine (U-701) off Cherry Point, N. C., to make the **first sure "kill" off the Atlantic Coast of the US**.



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8 July 1944 Lt. Col. Clifford Heflin flew a C-47 on the **first mission into France to rescue Allied airmen** who had parachuted behind enemy lines.

11 July 1953 Maj. John F. Bolt, U.S. Marine Corps, flying an F-86 Sabre, became the **first Marine jet ace while on a temporary exchange tour with the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing, USAF**. John Bolt was the only Marine and one of only seven Americans to become an ace in both WWII and Korea. In WWII, he flew with 'The Black Sheep', VMF-214, best known for its Commander, Pappy Boyington. Bolt had six kills each in World War II and Korea. (At right is Bolt during World War II.)



6 July 1950 **First strategic air attacks of the Korean War**. Nine B-29 Superfortresses bombed the Rising Sun oil refinery at Wonsan and a chemical plant at Hungnam in North Korea.

6 July 1951 An Air Materiel Command KB-29M tanker, operated by a 43d Air Refueling Squadron crew, conducted the **first in-flight refueling over enemy territory under combat conditions**. The tanker refueled four RF-80s flying reconnaissance missions over North Korea.



11 July 1955 The **Air Force Academy admitted its first class**. The 306 cadets attended classes at Lowry AFB until the Academy could move to its permanent location north of Colorado Springs. Lt. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon was recalled from retirement to become the academy's first superintendent. General Harmon, along with Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Nathan F. Twining and Secretary of the Air Force Harold Talbott, presided over the three-day celebration that marked the opening of the academy. (See image at left of the first class of cadet candidates in-processing in 1955).

8 July 1962 **STARFISH PRIME Test**. A Thor rocket launched from Johnston Island carried a 1.4 megaton hydrogen device to an altitude of 250 miles—the highest altitude for a U.S. thermonuclear blast. The detonation was 800 miles from Hawaii at 10:00 PM Hawaiian Standard Time. Because there is almost no air at an altitude of 250 miles, no fireball occurred. However, the sky was illuminated by an artificial aurora for more than seven minutes. The photo at right is from a KC-135 observation aircraft; the photo sequence below was taken from Hawaii on the night of the Starfish Prime Test.





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The electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from this test sent power surges throughout Oahu, causing the simultaneous failure of 30 strings of streetlights. Unofficial sources made various claims about the test, including blown fuses and circuit breakers, triggered burglar alarms, fused power lines, television and radio malfunctions, and even the crippling of satellites in low earth orbit.



8 July 1979 **Exercise GLOBAL SHIELD I.** Through 16 July, Strategic Air Command exercised every phase of its Single Integrated Operations Plan (SIOP). The Global Shield exercise involved SAC's active forces and Air Force Reserve units as most bombers, tankers, and missiles were placed on alert. Some aircraft dispersed to preselected bases, while others flew sorties over bomb-scoring sites. On 10 July, SAC launched two Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles from Vandenberg AFB. In the photo at left, six unarmed Minuteman III Mark 12 reentry vehicles from those two

ICBMs are shown approaching targets near Kwajalein Atoll in the Western Pacific Ocean.